DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 161 975 UD 018 493

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TITLE School Desegregation: Outcomes for Children. Findings in Search of a Theory.
INSTITUTION Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. Inst. for Urban and Minority Education.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 17p.; For a related document, see ED 102 279; Not available in hard copy due to publisher's restriction ; Small type may be marginally legible
JOURNAL CIT IRCD Bulletin; v13 n2 Spr 1978

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Black Students; Caucasian Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Integration Effects; Minority Groups; *Racial Factors; *School Integration; *Student Attitudes; *Student Characteristics; Success Factors

ABSTRACT

This article examines nine dimensions to the meaning of school desegregation for black children and analyzes one attitudinal outcome related to each dimension. The dimensions (listed first) and corresponding outcomes are as follows: (1) symbolic message and sense of control; (2) borrowed stigma aura and self esteem; (3) relative deprivation and morale; (4) roles and expectations of others and motivation; (5) peers as reference group and school related norms; (6) cross racial contact and cross racial attitudes; (7) minority group position and anxiety; (8) cultural marginality and group identity; and (9) comparative reference group and academic self confidence. The meaning of school desegregation for white children is also considered. Educational conditions under which desegregation is likely to have the most beneficial and least harmful outcomes for children are suggested for each dimension. The potential impact of individual differences, such as age, sex, mental health, achievement level and family socioeconomic status on successful biracial schooling is discussed. (Author/AM)

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ED161975

IRCD Bulletin

A Publication of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

Volume XIII, No. 2 Spring 1978

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School Desegregation: Outcomes for Children
*Findings in Search of a Theory**

Nancy H. St. John

"The worst thing about this school is its reputation" (white boy)

"The worst thing about this school is the colored people" (white girl)

"What seems to me really unfair is seeing people with money snob lower people" (black girl)

"The worst thing about this school is some of the teachers don't like colored people" (black girl)

"Kids need better schools" (black boy)

Scientific investigation of the results of school desegregation has from the first been action research and has leaned little on theory. Propositions derived from legal, philosophical, educational, or political opinion have been tested by social science methods. The findings having proved anomalous, it is high time to turn to social theory for enlightenment. But, given the multifaceted nature of the process of desegregation, it is unlikely that any one theoretical approach will bring full illumination. We must dissect the phenomenon into component parts and be eclectic in the search for clarifying concepts.

Beyond the methodological shortcomings of most research in this area, there are, I submit, three basic reasons why 20 years of study of the effect of school racial composition on children has netted such inconclusive results. First, desegregation is not a simple phenomenon, even for a single child in a single situation. Instead there are a number of dimensions to the experience, some favorable and some unfavorable. Second and third, the way in which desegregation is implemented, on the one hand, and the particular needs of individual children, on the other, may condition the outcome. If desegregated children gain in some respects but not in other respects or if gains for some children or some classrooms are counterbalanced by losses for other children or other classrooms, average gains would appear as inconsistent and statistically insignificant as they in fact do.

This [article] analyzes first the possible meanings for black children and white children of desegregated schools in contrast to segregated schools; next the essential conditions that must therefore obtain in the desegregated setting if pupils are to benefit in that regard are considered; finally, the potential impact of individual differences in predisposition for biracial schooling is discussed.

Dimensions of School Desegregation for Black Children[1]

The meaning of a phenomenon to the actors involved varies with the setting and the times. In the social context of the United States in the 1970s there seem to be at least nine dimensions to the meaning of school desegregation for black children. Each might be enlightened by reference to several bodies of social psychological theory. For each, several attitudinal variables would be appropriate measures of outcome. And several conditions must be met for

UD018493

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CHART 1—DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL RACIAL COMPOSITION

Dimension	*Attitudinal Outcome*	*Necessary Conditions for Optimal Desegregation*
Symbolic message	Sense of control	Black self-determination and share in control of school policies
Borrowed stigma-aura	Self-esteem	Equal access to high-quality school and high-quality program
Relative deprivation	Morale	No discrimination by administration, teacher, or students
Roles and expectations of others	Motivation	Nonracist staff; techniques used to raise expectations for minority group students
Normative reference group	School-related norms	SES desegregation; middle class in majority; within-school integration
Cross-racial contact	Cross-racial attitudes	Early desegregation; equal status in schools; non-competitive climate; administrative leadership
Minority group position	Anxiety	Avoidance of both tokenism and uncontrolled or rapid influx; minority group protected against social threat
Cultural marginality	Group identity	Biracial staff; curricular commitment to pluralism
Comparative reference group	Academic self-confidence	Individualization of instruction

each if desegregated pupils are to benefit. But for economy of space the discussion that follows focuses on one strand of theory, on one attitudinal outcome, and on the most essential school conditions suggested by each dimension. Chart 1 may be helpful in following the argument.

Symbolic Message and Sense of Control. Symbolic interactionist theory, as developed by Cooley (1902), Thomas (1918-20), and Mead (1934), sheds light on several dimensions of school desegregation. Its basic idea is that people live in a symbolic environment in which meanings and values shared with others guide their behavior. It is the actor's interpretation of the situation, rather than its structure or form, that is important.

Probably the most important aspect of school desegregation is the symbolic message it conveys. It was this aspect that the Supreme Court stressed in its 1954 decision. Until recently, the segregated school stood as a symbol of the powerlessness of the black community. Whether segregated by law, by administrative gerrymandering, or by discriminatory housing, schools have not been one race because of the wishes of most black parents. Polls have testified repeatedly to their preference for integration.[3] The segregated school therefore acted as a signal to the ghetto child that he could not expect equal treatment in life, nor could he expect to control his own destiny. The message to him was, "Know your place."[4] In contrast, the desegregated school symbolized the victory of the black community in winning equal protection of the law. The black child in this school symbolized the victory of the black community in winning equal protection of the law. The black child in this school should therefore develop a stronger belief in his ability to control his environment. And indeed, . . . several researchers have found a positive relation between school percentage white and pupil's sense of control.

Even children in all-black schools might be encouraged by the knowledge that others of their racial group were free to enter schools of their own choosing. Some psychologists have made a useful distinction between belief in individual power and belief in the power of one's own group.[4] It is probably belief in one's group that is primarily affected by changes in public policy. Affirmative action by court or school board is a message to all that opportunity will no longer be limited to the majority group. In Washington, D.C., and St. Louis, significant gains in black achievement followed systemwide desegregation, even though most black children remained in segregated classrooms.[5] One factor may well have been the encouragement the act of desegregation gave to the whole black community that its voice would be heard.

However, the symbolic meaning of desegregation may have changed since 1954. According to Hamilton (1972), "the traditionally understood integration movement was, in a profound sense, demeaning to many black nationalists" and "basically a pleading-beggar movement." Many militants now argue that advocates of desegregation or black parents who allow their children to be bused to majority white schools are thereby supporting black powerlessness. They are acting, say Carmichael and Hamilton (1967, pp. 52-54), "on the assumption that there is nothing of value in the black community" and "that in order to have a decent education, black people must move into a white neighborhood or send their children to a white school." Moreover, black parents of children in majority white schools, being in a minority or residents of another school district, have probably even less influence on the policies of those schools than they have in the ghetto.[6] Others note that the closing of ghetto schools and demotion of black personnel, a common feature in the desegregation of southern school systems, conveys a psychological message as the the inferiority of black institutions and staff.[7]

A segregated school is thus not necessarily a symbol of powerlessness, nor is a desegregated school a symbol of powerlessness denied. The essential condition appears to be self-determination and share in educational decision-making, both on an individual and a community level. The black child who attends a racially mixed school would especially benefit on this dimension if desegregation were voluntary or were achieved through community effort, as in the case of Boston's Operation Exodus,[8] or if it led to political gains in the control of the mixed school. On the other hand, if a black community achieved control of its local school and managed it successfully, and if parents consciously chose that school over an equally available desegregated one, their children might experience a greater sense of power than former classmates who had fled the ghetto.[9]

Borrowed Stigma-Aura and Self-Esteem. The individual's conception of himself grows out of social interac-

tion with others and reflects their conception of him or of the group or organization with which he is identified.[10] Students share in the reputation of their school, with presumed consequences to their self-esteem. Segregated schools have, historically, been inferior schools and probably still are, in spite of compensatory education and the impulse toward equal though separate status.[11] Moreover, the racial composition of a predominantly black school also tends to give it a reputation for low standards, poor equipment, and inexperienced staff—a reputation that outruns the facts and acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy.[12] The stigma (Goffman, 1963) of attending such schools might depress pupil self-esteem, and the aura of a mostly white school might raise it.

However, children's sense of their own worth would be enhanced neither by attending a low-status racially mixed school nor by attending a high status school in which they were accorded low status relative to classmates. Both situations are common. "Natural" desegregation usually means that black children enter schools in racially changing neighborhoods. These schools are typically described by staff and older residents as "going downhill." Planned desegregation, on the other hand, focuses attention on racial differences and, unless very carefully managed, makes minority group children the object of curiosity and study, if not hostility. They are further stigmatized if they are singled out for remedial help, if they are tracked into a low status program, or if they are the only children who arrive and leave by bus.

It is probable, though not yet adequately demonstrated, that an all-black school in a new location and beautiful building and conspicuous in the quality of its staff and program might contribute as much to the self-esteem of pupils as attendance at a high-status predominantly white school. But if significant sections of black society reflect white racism and attach even a limited stigma to being born black, it is unlikely that an all-black school, however exemplary, can avoid sharing that stigma.

Relative Deprivation and Morale. Closely related to the sense of powerlessness or stigma is the perception of one's own deprivation relative to that of another. Stouffer et al. (1949), studying this phenomenon among the American soldiers in World War II, found that morale depended on a comparison between soldiers' own situations and that of some other group with which they chose to compare themselves. Ghetto residents generally perceive that, in comparison with residents of other sections of the city, they are not getting their fair share of school resources. The effect on their children is undoubtedly frustration and lowered motivation.

Attendance at a desegregated school, however, would not always reduce perception of discrimination on the part of black pupils, any more than it would mitigate their powerlessness or stigma. In fact, their sense of deprivation in relation to the white pupils with whom they were in daily contact might be acute. Rosenberg and Simmons (1971)... found that segregated black children had little awareness of how low their family status was in societal terms. Their self-esteem was thus protected. If the SES or academic standards of the mixed school are higher than those of their former segregated school (and they often are), desegregated children may for the first time comprehend their own past deprivation. In addition, they may feel currently discriminated against if academic handicaps prevent access to certain courses, activities, or honors in the new school. On the other hand, in relation to others of their own race who remain in segregated schools, they may feel both gratification and deprivation—gratification with respect to the quality of education in the new school, deprivation with respect to separation from neighborhood friends, the long bus trip, or increased homework.[13]

Thus whether desegregation reduces sense of deprivation and raises morale for black pupils depends partly on their choice of referent group, but above all it depends on treatment in school. In view of the long history of racial discrimination in American society, perception of injustice on the part of minority people can probably be assuaged only by conditions that are for some years clearly better than equal. In predominantly black schools this means facilities, staff, and curricula that are visibly and dramatically superior; in racially balanced schools treatment of minority group pupils must perhaps be preferential to be equal in their eyes.[14]

Roles, Expectations of Significant Others, and Motivation. According to role theory, expectations are assigned to invididuals on the basis of their locations in social systems.[15] But in a complex society there is a great variation in specific locations and attendant role expectations. A most important role for a child is that of student, but expectations for students vary with the nature and reputation of their school and with the perspective of the viewer. Those whose expectations influence the young child most are usually members of his family, his teachers, and his neighborhood friends.

The expectations of these significant others tend to be low for the pupils of a ghetto school. Often principals, teachers, community residents (in general), and in particular parents do not believe that such a school will maintain high standards or prepare children to compete on an equal footing for college entrance or jobs. Several re searchers have hypothesized and found evidence of a correlation among (1) the parent's or teacher's estimate of the ability of a child, (2) the child's perception of such estimates, (3) the child's rating of his own ability, and (4) the child's actual performance.[16] It is probable that children would not be unaffected by low expectations for themselves as a group and as individuals as long as they remain in the typical ghetto school.

In a desegregated school, however, a black child does not necessarily escape the depressing effect of low expectations of others. The expectations of staff and pupils here may be low not for all, as perhaps is the case in the ghetto school, but merely for the "culturally deprived," the bused, or the black pupil. The effect would be all the more devastating. The fact that in such a school his parent's expectations for him are usually high could be in fact dysfunctional for a child, suggests Katz (1967), if his anxiety is thereby raised and he is not supported by equally reassuring expectations (and help) from his teachers.

There are techniques for raising the expectations of teachers and peers for the academic performance of minority group children. Cohen and co-workers (1970) have demonstrated in laboratory experiments with interracial teams that public demonstration of the competence of black subjects increases their assertive behavior and white partners' expectations for them.[17] However, sustained high expectations on the part of staff can probably have a facilitating effect on pupil motivation even in a pre-

dominantly black school, as evidenced by the extraordinary gains of pupils in the New York Demonstration Guidance program[18] and the initial gains for pupils in the Banneker schools in St. Louis.[19]

Peers as Reference Group and School-Related Norms. Another dimension of school desegregation is exposure to classmates whose ways of thinking and acting may be different from those of a child's family or neighborhood friends. How great will the influence of the new values and behavior patterns be? According to differential association theory, this depends on the degree of association.[20] The larger the group in a classroom, the greater the statistical probability that its norms will be adopted by all. But according to reference group theory, the outcome cannot be predicted by simple ratios: who influences whom depends on the reward structure in society and in the local setting.[21]

The pupils of a ghetto school are usually reported to be deficient in varying degrees in school-related interests, motivation, and self-discipline.[22] *If* white children are less deficient in these respects, and *if* we accept the proposition that the greater the proportion of any social group in a school the more likely that its norms and attitudes dominate and are adopted by members of the other groups, *then* we would predict improved attitudes for black children who move to a school in which white pupils are in the majority. The viability of this assumption rests on at least three (somewhat questionable) assumptions:

1. The first is that the norms of the white children involved are indeed more achievement oriented than those of the desegregating black children. But a review by Proshansky and Newton (1968) suggests that black and white children differ less in motivation than in the expectation of achieving their goals.[23] Furthermore, it is probable that differences in other norms important for achievement are a function of social class rather than race. Only if the racially balanced school were more middle class than the imbalanced school would desegregation increase exposure to achievement-oriented norms.

2. The second unwarranted assumption is that in a biracial school black and white children are integrated into a single social group. But in many schools racial groups are separated either formally through academic tracking and academic restrictions on extracurricular activities or informally through racial pride and hostility.[24] Homogenization of values and norms would occur within rather than between racial groups in this situation.

3. The third questionable assumption is that those in the minority accept those in the majority as their normative reference group. But sociological theory suggests that individuals who lack means of realizing status in the dominant society will reject the standards of that society and will seek status among peers who do likewise.[25] Until the day when there is full equality in the status of blacks and whites in American society, some racial separation in the reference group behavior of youth is to be expected. However, the reward structure and climate of the local school could also effect the degree of separation and cross-racial influence.

Thus it is social class desegregation rather than racial desegregation that holds the greatest potential for affecting children's norms and values. Whether desegregated children actually adopt the norms of middle-class peers depends on the degree of exposure to them as well as on the intergroup climate of the school. Whether the new norms are "better" or more "functional" or more "adaptive" depends, of course, on one's point of view.

Cross-Racial Contact and Cross-Racial Attitudes. Attendance at a biracial school exposes a child not only to the attitudes of the other group but also to a change in his own attitudes *toward* the other group. The hypothesis that interracial contact leads to reduced prejudice has received confirmation from research with adults and in other institutional areas. The important conditions, according to Allport (1954), are that contact be prolonged, equal status, in pursuit of common goals, and institutionally sanctioned. We would therefore expect black and white children to develop favorable attitudes toward each other after some months or years together, provided that (1) they are fairly similar in social class and academic background and in the status they are accorded in the desegregated school, (2) there is no real clash of interests or tense intergroup competition and (3) the school administration shows no racial bias and favors full integration rather than mere desegregation.

The first precondition for amelioration of prejudice, that contact be prolonged, has not yet been met in many desegregated schools. . . . Many studies measure changes in racial attitudes over the first six months of contact. But it takes time to get beyond the initial discomfort and tension of an interracial situation.[26] Several of the studies reviewed found evidence that long-term desegregation had a beneficial effect on attitudes.

The second precondition, that contact be equal status, is also seldom fully realized. Black and white children may be unequally prepared to be successful students or may be accorded unequal status in the peer group because of differential family background. It should be noted, however, that this condition for prejudice-reducing contact, equality of status, runs counter to one of the conditions stipulated in the previous section as necessary if desegregation is to have normative benefit: adopting the norms of the peers will be functional for a child's school achievement, I suggested, only if those peers are *more* middle class in background and display *more* achievement-oriented behavior than himself. What is perhaps necessary to satisfy both conditions is that staff treat lower-class newcomers with respect and equality so that they feel free to adopt middle-class norms through "anticipatory socialization."[27] Friendship and reduction in prejudice can then follow.

Administrative sanction is probably the most important precondition of prejudice-reducing contact in schools. If central office staff is determined that integration shall be complete, the status of all school children made equal, and racial competition avoided, the other necessary ingredients of healthy biracial schools probably will follow.[28]

Thus although an important dimension of school desegregation is the opportunity it affords for interracial contact, several other important conditions must be met if such contact is to lead to interracial friendliness rather than to interracial conflict or increased prejudice.

The presumption for each of the six dimensions so far considered is in favor of the desegregated school. There are three other dimensions for which the presumption is in favor of the segregated school.

Minority Group Position and Anxiety. The black child who is desegregated is usually a newcomer in an unfamiliar setting, a "sociological stranger,"[29] and, typically, in a

racial minority. His consequent fear of social threat, be it of mere rejection or of physical harm, will be mild or severe depending on the community, the circumstances surrounding desegregation, his ego strength, and his prior interracial experience.[30] Katz argues that "covert reactions to social threat would constitute an important source of intellectual impairment" (1968, p. 256) since anxiety, distraction, and emotion all lower efficacy and since the threatened child might try not to excel in order to avoid arousing further resentment.[31]

Even when the social threat is mild or nonexistent, the black child in a majority white classroom may not be able to forget his color. He cannot avoid perception of his racial status and of the prejudices of some whites.[32] Rather than being simply a pupil, a boy or a girl, he must play the role of representing his race, its strengths, and its agenda. An evaluation of the ABC program [described elsewhere in the book by Nancy St. John] that places disadvantaged black students in independent middle-class schools quotes a senior who wrote, "I am tired of being under the microscope explaining things which pertain to my people."[33] Pierce (1968) writes, "I believe our society will be integrated when no one has to think any time during the day about his color. . . . A white cannot possibly comprehend the amount of psychic energy that is required to be a Negro" (p. 24).

The effect of black/white ratios on race relations has been the object of more theoretical speculation than systematic study. Allport (1954) suggested that the rapid influx and growing density of a minority population "is not in itself a sufficient principle to explain prejudice. What it seems to accomplish is the aggravation of whatever prejudice exists" (p. 229). According to Blalock (1967), conditions will be most favorable for a minority group if its numbers are sufficient to exert pressure without constituting a power threat to the majority group. This means perhaps the avoidance of less than 15% and more than 40% of black children in a school.[34]

Planned desegregation need not mean, for the black child, being in a racial minority in his classroom, but it usually does (and in fact must, if the benefits of several other dimensions of desegregation are to be realized) and so exposes him to a degree of social threat. Whether the threat is mild or severe, whether he responds with anxiety or aggressiveness, whether the situation improves or deterioriates after the first weeks of school will depend, theory suggests, on black/white ratios and the rapidity of change in such ratios, on the interracial climate of the school, on staff support, as well as on his own interpersonal skill.

Cultural Marginality and Group Identity. The black child in a white classroom faces more than social threat. He is also a marginal man, bridging two social worlds, and his loyalty to and identity with his own racial group may be weakened.[35] To the extent that there are real differences in values and mores between these worlds, the child may be torn between feeling he both should and should not, in Hamilton's words (1968) "attempt to be a carbon copy of the culture and ethos of another racial and ethnic group." Pettigrew (1969) suggests that the values of black and white families are more similar than either realize. Desegregated children have the opportunity of making this discovery, and their values will converge still further as a result. Nevertheless, faced with a choice between separation and acculturation, the child risks both estrangement from his own racial group and rejection by the other group, as well as confusion as to his identify and resultant normlessness.[36]

...Crain (1971) found that black adults whose childhood experience with integration was inconsistent (where neighborhood or elementary school or high school was integrated and the other two were segregated) had lowest self-esteem and sense of control, presumably because they had not been able to develop a stable identity. Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) found that in a black setting children's self-esteem was not lower if they came from a separated or never-married family. In white schools, on the other hand, where this family type is more stigmatized, such children had lower self-esteem. They conclude that "consonant social context" protects an individual's self-esteem whereas a "dissonant context" threatens his self-esteem.

It should be noted, however, that in a real sense many black children experience marginality in all-black schools. The culture of the school is typically that of white, middle-class America and does not encourage healthy racial identity. The cure for marginality in schools of whatever racial mix is removal of racist overtones from the curriculum, provision for cultural emphasis on the Afro-American experience, and staff integration. But, according to Allport (1954), pluralism cannot be mandated: "What is needed is freedom for both assimilation and for pluralism to occur according to the needs and desires of the minority group itself" (p. 240).

Comparative Reference Group and Academic Self-Confidence. Peers serve as comparative as well as normative reference group. In other words, individuals not only adopt the norms of peers, but also take the achievement of peers as a standard against which to measure their own success.[37] When a child moves from a segregated to an integrated school, he may leave a relatively protected colony and face what Pettigrew (1967) calls "the opportunity for cross-racial evaluation" or what Pierce (1968) calls "the incessant burden of proving himself to the satisfaction of the white majority" (p. 24). Katz (1964) believes that such cross-racial comparisons can have both a high incentive value and a high informational value. The black child wants to succeed in the interracial classroom and there learns that all whites are not better students than he. Moreover, the level and pace of instruction may be more stimulating than that in his previous school.

But the advantage of realistic competition can be offset by fear of failure. Katz goes on to postulate that in view of generally inadequate early training, either at home or in segregated schools, a desegregated child will often have a low probability of success. In addition, he may suffer from unrealistic feelings of inferiority. He is therefore not able to live up to expectations of his parents and his own motivation to do well. Anxiety and lowered self-concept follow.

In the study of Baltimore school children referred to previously, Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) report these findings:

> Black children in white secondary schools obtain higher marks than those in black schools, but although high marks are conducive to high self-esteem, black children in integrated schools still have lower self-esteem than segregated blacks. We reasoned that the black children in the white

schools are comparing themselves unfavorably with either the white children in their schools (interaction group) or with whites in general (non-membership group); they are not comparing themselves with those of most black children (membership group). (P. 137)

Kemper (1968) argues that coincidence of audience and of normative and comparative reference groups is most facilitative for achievement. Tension and separation between racial groups probably prevents such coincidence in many schools, with the results that black students maintain their own norms and behavior patterns but perform to a largely white audience and measure their success by white standards. The outcome is probably deleterious to both self-confidence and achievement.

In a series of laboratory experiments Katz (1968) demonstrated that black subjects perform better in a biracial situation when the threat of punishment is mild,[38] when they do not expect to be judged against white norms,[39] when the task is not defined as a test of intelligence,[40] and when the chance of success is believed to be slightly better than even. Thus the factors that will probably determine whether the desegregated classroom is, on balance, academically facilitating rather than threatening are lack of interracial tension and either initial similarity in achievement level of black and white children or else supportiveness of school staff, availability of school academic policies that favor overcoming handicaps, avoidance of competition, and above all individualization of instruction.[41] But, as in the case of other dimensions of desegregation, many of these same factors could transform a ghetto school into a setting in which a strong yet realistic academic motivation is fostered.

Dimensions of School Desegregation for White Children

There are as many dimensions to school desegregation for white children as for black children, but they are discussed in less detail here.

The pupils in a segregated white school are less aware than those in a segregated black school of their participation in the symbolic denial of the American democratic ideal of equality to all citizens. In the North, until recently, distance from the ghetto and a conspiracy of silence have quarantined most white children from realization of the existence and nature of ghetto schools. This is no longer true except for very young children. The desegregation controversy and its treatment by press and television have brought home to suburban children a realization of their privileged position and exposed them to a false sense of superiority. Rescued from ignorance, they are now exposed to the more dangerous rationalizations of their elders and to a sense of de facto implication in an institution which denies the democratic ideals they are being taught to revere. Thus this symbolic dimension of segregation can harm white children through the encouragement of hypocrisy and prejudice. In contrast, desegregation should encourage pride in community and faith in democracy.

Other meanings of desegregation to white pupils depend very much on black-to-white ratios and on expectations for future change in ratios. As long as the proportion of black pupils is small (under 20%) and expected to remain so, there is no reason for white pupils to experience stigma, relative deprivation, social threat, marginality, or a change in norms, standards, or the expectations of their significant others. Prejudice may be reduced if black pupils are not too different in social background.

On the other hand, a school 20 to 50% black could have negative influence on white children on some dimensions. Even a majority white school may have low status; proximity to a growing ghetto or the rapid increase in the proportion of black pupils often lead to perceptions of falling standards which outrun the facts and act as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Especially if further racial change were expected, whites in schools 20 to 50% black might sense stigma, deprivation, and lowered expectations relative to pupils in all-white schools. They might overreact to such perceptions and lose interest in school; they might feel the same sense of relative deprivation in comparison with former classmates who have moved to the suburbs that blacks feel in comparing themselves with pupils in suburban schools. If they were bused to inner city schools against their will, they might feel conscripted and resentful. If staff appeared to favor black students in any way, whites would feel discriminated against and might become more antiblack. And they might experience social threat if blacks were aggressive or united. If black students were accepted as their leaders or their norms proved attractive, the values and norms of white students might be affected (white parents would say "for the worse").

Schools over 50% black would usually not benefit white pupils for the same reasons that they would not benefit black pupils. Unless extra resources were poured in, the disadvantage might here be real rather than imagined, and whites would thereby lose the "advantage" of numerical and cultural dominance. White children will be just as adversely affected as are black children by attending a school with low status in the eyes of the community, a school in which their parents and teachers have low expectations for academic accomplishment, or a school with mediocre or low academic standards. If their prior training had been strong, however, they might enjoy being "big frogs in a little pond," academically speaking.[42] But though their grades and self-esteem might thus be enhanced, objective test scores would presumably suffer.

According to the theory of differential association discussed earlier, the larger the percentage of black children in a school, the more likely that white children will adopt their attitudes and behaviors. But this does not warrant the conclusion that the more blacks in a school the less achievement-oriented will be the attitudes and behavior of white children. As suggested, there is probably little difference between the norms of the two groups of children, once social class is controlled, and any differences that exist are certainly not necessarily to the exclusive advantage of one racial group. For instance, studies repeatedly find that black youth report higher aspirations but show less realism or knowledge about the world of work. If white youth learned aspiration while black youth learned realism about how to achieve it, both could benefit from mutual association. Though there is the possibility that desegregation will hurt white children by exposing them to the victims of social disorganization and discrimination, there is also the likelihood that they will either resist or benefit from homogenization of norms.

The point should be made, however, that isolated white children in predominantly black schools are as liable to social threat and constricting fear as are black pioneers in

predominantly white schools. The chief difference is that the former are usually low SES children in low SES schools and the latter upwardly mobile children in middle-class schools. The realistic risk of physical molestation might therefore be greater for the white child in the ghetto, the risk of ostracism by the "well-bred" greater for the black child in surburbia. Either social situation is stressful; whether it results in increased hostility or lowered self-confidence would depend on many factors, especially the child's basic personality structure and family support, on the one hand, and the understanding and protection of teachers, on the other.

Thus a simple change in the racial composition of their school may have many simultaneous consequences for the pupils involved. A message of discouragement or hope may be conveyed, a stigma conferred or withdrawn, a sense of relative deprivation produced or alleviated, the expectations of significant others lowered or raised, the normative reference group changed, intergroup contact narrowed or broadened, the ingroup/outgroup balance shifted, cultural identification confused or clarified, and the standard for self-evaluation downgraded or upgraded.

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

The dimensions of school desegregation just described are potentially operative for all students, but their impact could be minor or drastic depending on the manner in which desegregation is implemented and on characteristics of individual children.

The educational conditions under which desegregation is likely to have the most beneficial and least harmful outcomes for children are suggested by a consideration of its various dimensions. Though on six dimensions the presumption is that racial balance in schools would be beneficial to the children involved, in each case I believe that this would be true only if certain conditions were met. And on the three dimensions on which the presumption is the other way, the negative outcome might be avoided if circumstances were right. Desegregation should benefit children under the following conditions:

1. Desegregation, as a symbol of equality affirmed and powerlessness denied, should increase black sense of control and white appreciation of democracy, *provided* it is achieved through individual or community self-determination and is freely chosen by the families involved, and provided black parents share in the control of school policies.

2. Desegregation should reduce stigma and enhance the self-esteem of black pupils *provided* that it is to a school of higher status and provided they are not placed in low-status programs or classes in the new school.

3. Desegregation, by reducing sense of deprivation relative to pupils in other schools, should raise the morale of black pupils, *provided* they do not feel deprived in relation to majority white pupils in the new school.

4. Desegregation may raise the expectations of significant others and so the motivation of black pupils, *privided* such expectations are from staff as well as parents, for those whose initial performance is low as well as high, and for white and black students alike.

5. Desegregation brings association with peers from whom favorable norms may be acquired, *provided* racial desegregation means social class desegregation and does not result in official or unofficial within-school segregation.

6. Desegregation brings interracial contact which may reduce prejudice, *provided* it is continued over a number of years, *provided* it is equal status and noncompetitive, and *provided* that the school administration offers firm leadership.

On the other hand, desegregation may raise the following problems:

1. Desegregation inevitably places some pupils in a minority group situation which may induce anxiety, *unless* both tokenism and rapid influx is avoided and *unless* the staff is firm and skillful in protecting whichever race is in the minority.

2. Desegregation exposes minority group pupils to cultural marginality and confusion as to their own identity, *unless* the staff is interracial, *unless* the curriculum recognizes the minority group culture, and *unless* there is opportunity for choice between assimilation and pluralism.

3. Desegregation allows self-evaluation against academic standards that may in some cases discourage motivation, *unless* help is available, competition is avoided, and instruction and evaluation are individualzed.

Many of these conditions would also temper the potentially negative impact of majority black schools. In fact, on several dimensions segregated black children appear to be in the stronger position. On the other dimensions it seems that only integration in racially balanced schools will realize the desired outcome.

The word *integration* as here used needs further definition. To some people the noun connotes simply the mixing, voluntary or involuntary, of people of different racial or cultural backgrounds. For this concept, *desegregation* is the term used in this book. Other interpretations of the meaning of *integration* refer to equality of opportunity, to equality of social status, to assimilation, or to its opposite, the acceptance of cultural diversity.[4]

An interesting study by Marascuilo and Dagenais (1972) asked Berkeley high school seniors to choose among eight definitions the ones that "come closest to your own feeling about integration." All racial groups rejected the ideas of forced mixing or assimilation and gave high priority to free association on the basis of mutual interest, to equality of social status, and to pluralism ("open acceptance of another person and his racial and cultural heritage"). A racial difference appeared in regard to Webster's definition, "the incorporation or inclusion into society on the basis of equal membership, of people who differ on some characteristic (like race)."[4] Both Asian and black students (but especially blacks) rejected this definition more than did white students. The authors suggest that to minority group students the dictionary definition implies giving up their own cultural and racial heritage.

The analysis in this chapter of the social-psychological dimensions of school segregation and of the conditions under which desegregation would confer benefits suggests that the Berkeley young people are right in their support of free association over forced mixing, of equality of social status over mere equality of opportunity, and of pluralism over assimilation. It is integration in this sense that seems a necessary condition of desirable desegregation.

Individual Differences

The impact of school desegregation is conditioned not only by the local situation and the manner in which it is implemented, but also by characteristics of the individual children involved. Research . . . suggests that among the relevant individual factors are age, sex, ego strength, academic ability, and SES. On the average, those who are most favorably affected by desegregation seem to be the young children, the boys, the self-confident, the high achievers, and the middle class. Their opposite numbers may benefit more from segregated schools or, if desegregated, probably require more support from teachers to keep the experience from being counterproductive.

Age. Desegregation is probably more beneficial if it is begun in early elementary years. Academic development is cumulative, and the gap in achievement between minority and majority group children ususally widens with age. Thus according to several investigators the younger the age the greater the growth in achievement. There is also some evidence that desegregation is socially easier in early grades. Young children are aware of racial differences and stereotypes, but racial prejudices and fears are less firmly established than in older children. School situations in which attitudes deteriorate or open conflict occurs are usually at the junior high or secondary level and follow segregated early schooling.

Sex. Among blacks the social threat of desegregation is almost universally reported to be greater for girls than boys. Several studies [have] . . . indicated that the aspirations, self-concept, and assurance of black girls was lower in desegregated than in segregated schools.[45] Other studies have found that black girls show less favorable interracial attitudes and greater own-group preference than the other race-sex groups. Among whites, on the other hand, the social threat of desegregation appears greater for boys than girls.

We can only conjecture as to the reasons for such sex differences in reaction to mixed schooling. The importance of athletics to boys and beauty to girls in the Adolescent Society studied by Coleman (1961) provides one clue. In racially mixed schools the athletic skills of many black males give them self-confidence and prestige which will be lacking for their sisters as long as feminine beauty is judged by the standards of white society.[46] It is also possible that black athletes may be seen as heros by white girls but as rivals by white boys. Black girls probably resent any friendship between their brothers and white girls and (consciously or unconsciously reacting against the historic exploitation of black women by white men) reject on their part any advances from white boys.[47]

Mental Health. Desegregation may be more beneficial to pupils already high in ego strength and self-confidence. A number of psychologists have pointed out that individual differences in temperament, cognitive traits, and family experiences will result in idiosyncratic variation in reactions to desegregation.[48] Many studies have found more symptoms of personality disorders and anxiety among black children than white children, and Katz (1967) demonstrated in several laboratory experiments that anxiety tends to be especially high with white partners or white testers. Wessman (1969) studied the progress of highly selected minority group boys in independent schools (Project ABC). Academic success over two years was related to initial scores on a personality inventory indicating that the student was serious, motivated, responsible, conscientious. Such outcomes may seem self-evident, but they also suggest that some children will require special consideration when a school system desegregates.

Achievement Level. Students of high ability or achievement level are generally more ready to benefit from desegregation. According to Katz' (1964) model, a biracial classroom is socially facilitating to high achievers but threatening to low achievers, whose probability of success is likely to be low and who often fear failure. He found previously low-achieving boys to be more self-critical and to have higher test anxiety than high-achieving boys, even when there was no objective difference in their current task performance. Several studies [have] . . . found that pupils with low initial academic ability made few or no gains when desegregated.[49] As to the differential effect of achievement level on interracial friendship, we found in Boston that black sixth graders were significantly more friendly to and popular with white classmates if their initial achievement level was high.[50] Among whites achievers tend to be the least prejudiced; their status is not threatened.[51] But downward mobility in academic status is associated with increased hostility.[52]

Family SES. A child's social and economic background affects his adjustment to desegregation in the same way that his academic background does. In general, black children of low SES are least ready socially and academically to adjust well to biracial schools and children of high SES are most ready. This generalization is supported by the findings of a number of studies reviewed in this book.

Conclusion. This list of variables is not meant to be exhaustive but to suggest that there are identifiable characteristics of children which condition the benefits of desegregation for them. Other variables that probably affect reaction to desegregation include physical appearance (size, strength, maturity, charm), previous interracial experience, and racial attitudes of parents.[53] For white children similar propositions could be developed as to which children would probably benefit or suffer from, for example, reverse busing to ghetto schools. For any ethnic group the expected within-group differences would be a matter of central tendencies, not categorical differences. Obviously many older, lower-class children will respond better to an interracial classroom than many younger or middle-class children, though on the average this is probably not so.

I am not suggesting here that desegregation is only for the strong. It is true that those with any type of handicap are poorly prepared for a situation that is strange, stressful, or competitive, but in many settings this description might fit the segregated school better than the desegregated one. Nor am I suggesting that there are only negative reasons for preferring a black school. For certain children at certain stages in their development a black school might represent a great challenge or fill a great need. But in any case, in view of the number of relevant variables and their possible permutations and interaction effects, readiness for the stress or need for the challenge of desegregation appears to be a very individual matter.

A fourfold table is the most graphic way of conceptualizing the probably joint influence of individual and situational differences on the outcomes of school desegregation. Not forgetting that desegregation is, as this [article] has argued, a many-sided phenomenon and for any one child in any one situation, favorable in some respects and unfavorable in other respects, nevertheless on balance the outcome will probably be as follows:

		Individual Characteristics	
		Unfavorable	*Favorable*
Desegregated.....	Unfavorable	Prognosis poor	?
Situation.....	Favorable	?	Prognosis good

If most of the conditions stipulated above are met, then for those children who are well equipped (according to the characteristics I have named), the academic and attitudinal outcomes of desegregation will be favorable. If the conditions are not met and children are not equipped, then it is probable that desegregation will produce no benefit and possibly much harm. In the other two cases the outcome remains in doubt and probably hinges on unusually favorable qualities of either the individual or the situation.

The discussion in this [article] is admittedly speculative. Though supported by strands of social-psychological theory and not contradicted by the evidence reviewed [elsewhere by this author], the propositions here outlined have yet to be tested rigorously. Should large public funds now be expended on new research? How should such research be conducted? And while awaiting the results, what should public policy be?

ALTERNATIVES AND CHOICE: THE ROAD AHEAD[54]

"Someday I will be out of Roxbury I hope because I don't like Roxbury" (black boy, grade 6)

"Someday I will have people trust in me and respect me" (black boy, grade 6)

"Someday I will go out to see the whol world and meat other people in it" (black girl, grade 6)

School desegregation is unfinished national business. After two decades of agonizing, rhetoric, interposition, litigation, protest, and half-steps, most school systems in the South may at last be desegregated, but many schools and many children are not. In the North, there is today more racial segregation than there was in 1954.[55] And everywhere the issue continues to divide Americans. Yet at the same time there has been continued growth in commitment to integration in principle, not only by the general public[56] but also by legislators, officials, school boards, and educators, while judicial interpretation of the constitutional mandate for desegregation has expanded steadily. Therefore, though the road ahead may be rough and tortuous, it cannot circle back.

Given the political and educational importance of the topic, it is regrettable that we still know so little about the meaning of school desegregation to the pupils involved. The reason for our ignorance is that by and large theory has been undeveloped, educational experimentation limited, and research poorly designed. There is no indication, however, that we need to revise the basic hypothesis that in the long run integration benefits children. It is the implementation rather than the goal which now needs attention—how can "mere desegregation" be translated into "true integration"?

Summing Up

This book has reviewed more than 120 studies of the relation of school racial composition and the achievement, attitudes, or behavior of children. On the basis of this evidence biracial schooling must be judged neither a demonstrated success nor a demonstrated failure.

As implemented to date, desegregation has not rapidly closed the black-white gap in academic achievement, though it has rarely lowered and sometimes raised the scores of black children. Improvement has been more often reported in the early grades, in arithmetic, and in schools over 50% white, but even here the gains have usually been mixed, intermittent, or nonsignificant. White achievement has been unaffected in schools that remained majority white but significantly lower in majority black schools.

Biracial schooling is apparently not detrimental to the academic performance of black children, but it may have negative effects on their self-esteem. It is not merely academic self-concept in the face of higher standards that is threatened, but also general self-concept. In addition, desegregation apparently lowers educational and vocational aspirations. It is possible, however, to interpret a reduction of unrealistically high aspirations as an overall gain. Moreover, there is some evidence that in the long run desegregation may encourage the aspiration, self-esteem, and sense of environmental control of black youth.

The immediate effect of desegregation on interracial attitudes is sometimes positive but often negative. Thus white racism is frequently aggravated by mixed schooling. Friendship is somewhat more likely to develop among younger children or those who have been long desegregated, but at the secondary school level there is great range in the degree of racial cleavage, community to com-

The development of this paper was supported by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education pursuant to a contract with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment in professional matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the National Institute of Education.

munity. In some schools there is considerable friendly interaction and mutual respect. In other schools contact is minimal and interracial incidents frequent. Among blacks the most ingroup in their friendship patterns are girls and those in classes with very few of their own race. Among whites the most ingroup are boys, but the interracial behavior of both sexes is much affected by the social class congruity of the races in the school.

But although desegregation is not to date a demonstrated success, it is not yet a demonstrated failure. There is as little evidence of consistent loss as there is of consistent gain. Further, in spite of the large number of studies, various limitations in design weaken the best of them. Thus in a sense the evidence is not all in.

A very narrow range of outcomes has been studied. There have been virtually no long-term longitudinal studies with predesegregation and postdesegregation scores on the same tests and with subjects randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. Nor, in lieu of random assignment, have subjects been matched with sufficient care on home background and initial ability. In many studies no attempt was made to measure family background and social class; and where the attempt was made the measurement was usually crude and undependable. Nor has school qualtiy been controlled; in fact, virtually the only studies that have employed an experimental design have been those in which children bused to outlying schools are compared with former classmates who continued in ghetto schools. Even when sending and receiving schools are in the same system (and they often are not), they usually differ a great deal in plant, equipment, program, and the credentials of teachers. But the most serious lack in desegregation research has been inattention to the classroom process. The defensiveness of principals and teachers has precluded proper evaluation of their role in structuring the racial climate of schools. A further possible limitation to the relevance of many studies is the year in which the data were gathered. The racial climate of opinion has changed drastically over the last two decades and with it probably the meaning of desegregation. Even five-year-old findings may be dated and not necessarily representative of the current situation.

But having admitted these limitations, and fully cognizant that all the facts may not be in, I believe the evidence of wide-ranging studies is in one respect clear: school desegregation per se has no unitary or invariable effect on children. As indicated [earlier], my interpretation of the mixed and inconsistent findings is twofold. First, desegregation is a multifaceted phenomenon which can be simultaneously beneficial in some respects and harmful in others. Second, its impact (i.e., whether the benefits outweigh the harm) depends both on children's individual needs and more important on how it is implemented by the school staff.

If this interpretation of the evidence is valid, then several conclusions seem in order:

1. Research effort should now go to examining the classroom process and to testing theoretically grounded propositions regarding factors in the school situation that affect its interracial climate.

2. Policy-makers should give more attention to balancing racial status within schools and less to balancing racial ratios between schools. Principals and teachers should be encouraged to experiment in ways of raising the status of the minority group.

3. The feasibility and advantage of stable, integrated neighborhoods as an alternative to intermetropolitan busing should be explored.

4. Children should not be assigned to schools solely on the basis of race; instead families should be given circumscribed choice among schools that differ in educational philosophy as well as in location and racial ratio.

In drawing these conclusions as to policy I am admittedly on less sure ground than when reviewing the literature or reporting my own findings. The reader must believe that these ideas did not antedate or channel the empirical inquiry, but are my subsequent attempt to make sense out of all the evidence.

NOTES

1. Section 1 of [this article] is a much revised version of a paper that appeared in H. Walberg and A. Kopan, eds., *Urban Education Today: Rethinking Theory and Practice*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1972.
2. Brink and Harris (1964); Campbell and Schuman (1968); Marx (1967); and Goldman (1970).
3. See Pettigrew (1964).
4. Gurin et al. (1969).
5. Hansen (1960); Stallings (1959).
6. See Handlin (1966), and Piven and Cloward (1967), on the political suicide of desegregation. A number of researchers report that black parents are less active in school affairs following desegregation of the system or their children. See Prichard (1969).
7. Entin (1972). Poussaint (1970) writes, "Since integration is nearly always a one-way street that blacks travel to a white institution, then an implied inferiority of the black man is inherent in the situation, because it is *he who must* seek out whites to better his position. This implies that only he can benefit and learn; that he has nothing to offer whites; that whites have nothing to learn from his presence" (p. 13).
8. Teele, Jackson, and Mayo (1967).
9. Guttentag reports that children in Harlem's Community controlled school (IS201) blamed school failure on parents, teachers, and school rather than on self. Clark (1973) argues that decentralization and community control without control of the purse strings is hollow. Moreover, without a transition in which ghetto people are supported and trained to run their own schools, small groups will tend to dominate, and community-wide control will not be realized.
10. Cooley (1902).
11. See McCauley and Ball (1959); Coleman et al. (1966); and *National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968).
12. Fauman (1957); Pinderhughes (1964).
13. Vanneman and Pettigrew (1972) have demonstrated the usefulness of Runciman's (1966) distinction between egotistic and fraternal deprivation in explaining racial attitudes of white adults. The distinction also clarifies the potential gains and losses to children's morale that goes with desegregation. The key in both cases is the choice of referent group. See also U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1970).
14. Young (1964).
15. Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958).
16. For example, see Clark (1965); Brookover et al. (1965); Davidson and Lang (1960); Schwartz and Tangri (1965); Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968).
17. Katz (1967) reports experiments with similar results.
18. Wrightstone (1960).
19. U.S. Commission (1967).
20. Sutherland (1955).
21. Shibutani (1962) and Merton (1957).
22. According to Becker (1952) and Herriot and St. John (1966), this is what teachers and principals say.
23. Preliminary analysis of Riverside data leads Gerard and Miller (1971) to question the hypothesis that minority children are different in motivation.
24. See the report of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Bailey, 1970).
25. Merton (1957); Cohen (1955).
26. Pettigrew (1969); Pierce (1968).
27. Merton (1957).

28. See U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1967a), p. 154, on administrative measures necessary for effective school desegregation.
29. Simmel (1950).
30. Coles (1967) and Milner (1953). See Cottle's poignant account of Harry Benjamin in *The New York Times Magazine*, 23 April 1972. The Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1957) predicted types of psychological stress that would be involved, including "emigration neurosis," the near-paranoid interpretation of majority-group behavior by the newcomer who expects rejection.
31. Allport (1954), under the heading, "Traits due to Victimization," analyzed the ego defenses that frequently develop among those who are socially threatened.
32. Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) found that 34% of black children in predominantly black schools, but 51% in predominantly white schools reported having ever been teased because of race (p. 27). Moreover, blacks in white schools were considerably more likely than blacks in black schools to say that "most people in America" rank blacks last (p. 37). See also Williams (1964).
33. Perry (1973).
34. Patchen and Davidson (1973) found that rapid increase in percentage of blacks in Indianapolis high schools was associated with avoidance of blacks by whites. The more power students of either race had, the more positively they acted toward the other race.
35. Stonequist (37); Park (1950).
36. Fishman (1961).
37. Kelley (1952); Kemper (1968).
38. Katz and Greenbaum (1963).
39. Katz et al. (1964).
40. Katz et al. (1965).
41. Mahan (1968) found that Project Concern youth bused from Hartford ghetto to suburban schools benefited especially in those schools in which extra teachers were assigned to help with their academic adjustment. Pettigrew et al. (1973) point out, however, that desegregation often means a reduction rather than an increase in such supporting services. See also Frelow (1971). The evidence of Stodolsky and Lesser (1967) as to the different modal mental ability patterns of different racial groups suggest the advisability of adapting instruction in such a way as to capitalize the individual child's initial strengths and to minimize his initial weaknesses, remembering that his own style may not follow any modal racial pattern.
42. Davis (1966).
43. Handlin (1966) notes two meanings of integration, (1) openness of society and leveling of barriers, and (2) racial balance, and deplores the shift in public emphasis from (1) to (2). Pettigrew (1971) writes, "the long-term goal of integration is not a complete obliteration of cultural pluralism, of distinctive Negro ghettoes, but rather the transformation of these ghettoes from racial prisons to ethnic areas freely chosen or not chosen" (p. 323).
44. This is an adaptation of *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* definition.
45. Armor (1967); McPartland (1968); Denmark (1970); Carrigan (1969).
46. See Freeman et al. (1966); Ransford (1970).
47. Grier and Cobbs (1968).
48. Ausubel and Ausubel (1963); Bernard (1958); and Milner (1953).
49. Denmark (1970); Purl and Dawson (1971); and Wessman (1969); on the other hand, perhaps due to "regression to the mean," Carrigan (1969) and Frary and Goolsby (1970) find greatest gains for those with low pretransfer scores.
50. St. John and Lewis (1975); for a similar finding for Indianapolis high schools, see Patchen and Davidson (1973).
51. Useem (1971); Patchen and Davidson (1973).
52. Lombardi (1962).
53. Patchen and Davidson (1973) found that the more positive their families' racial attitudes and the more interracial contacts they had had in their neighborhood and other settings, the more friendly interaction blacks and whites report with other-race classmates in high school.
54. Part of this section is a much revised version of a paper in *Integrated Education* in 1972. (See Bibliography.)
55. Office of Civil Rights (1971); Rossell and Crain (1973).
56. Greeley and Sheatsley (1971).

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Published quarterly by the Institute for Urban and Minority Education. Subscription rate: $4.00 per year. Back issues: 1-9 copies, $1.00 each; 10-24 copies, $0.80 each; 25-49 copies, $0.60 each; 50 copies and over, $0.50 each.

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